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And They Were There-Reports of Meetings-YBP GOBI Users Meeting

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It is not my impression that this is true for everyone in the publishing industry. Many publishers are operating on very narrow margins. Small changes in costs and sales figures can have substantial impact. Even when such missteps do not jeopardize the publisher itself, it seems likely that they can be career threatening for those who got it wrong.

It's a mistake to focus too much on what things used to cost in paper. Libraries are not in a good position to argue that online doesn't cost a lot more. We asked for integrated library systems, partly on the grounds that they would be cheaper and more efficient. We wouldn't have to have an army of filers. Think of the savings in paper for cards and oak for catalog cabinets. And, we pointed out; we would offer value-added features. Patrons would be able to tell what was checked out, at the bindery, on order, at other libraries, and so forth and so on.

We were right about the value-added and we were wrong about the costs, mainly, I think, because we couldn't anticipate the infrastructure required by these new entities. No one mentioned network specialists, server managers, or 24x7 help desks. But we have them now and we want more. They cost lots more than filers did. Fiber optic cable isn't noticeably cheaper than catalog cards. Or servers than catalog cabinets. The online world has all sorts of advantages—but lower costs are not always among them.

I would suggest a principle for identifying publishers who have unsatisfactory pricing structures at the moment, but who might be regarded more as future allies than as emerging bad guys.

This is the assumption that the future sometimes resembles the past.

That isn't always true, of course. On the whole, though, if you want sunny weather, you move to Arizona in preference to Montana. In the southwest, we speculate as to why winters are lately so mild and conjecture about global warming. But I'd still bet on Arizona if I were searching for year round sunshine. When making choices in everyday life, we assume that a person, company, or service which has served us well for years will continue to do so. This assumption is sometimes wrong, but surely it's a reasonable place to start.

There are only a few problem publishers. They control a big piece of the current landscape, but there aren't that many of them. And in a world in which the underlying mechanisms of scholarship—and its validation and dissemination—are changing and faculty seem lately more militant than librarians, competitive forces at last may exert significant downward pressure on tolerance towards outrageous prices.

Publishers who provided excellent value in print deserve the benefit of the doubt as

they dream up electronic pricing schemes that will protect them, they hope, from too rapid a decline in print sales and assorted other disasters. Before widespread cancellations, libraries paid prices which rose at an incredible rate, whether calculated in dollars or percentages. Publishers of titles which don't cost a lot today could have asked for and gotten similar prices. If they didn't raise prices then, mightn't we assume they intend to continue reasonable pricing? And if there are glitches and problems and prices that seem too high, there may be explanations.

It might be fear. It might be anxiety. And it might be justified.

Libraries, individuals, laboratories, and businesses may well stop buying paper—or buying as many titles electronically as they would like—not because they want to, but because they don't have funding to do essential new things and keep up the old ones as well. Maybe not this year, but it's very difficult to know how things will be three or four years down the road.

But the bottom line needs to be cost. There is ample evidence that it is possible to produce a scholarly journal, in paper or electronically, for a few hundred dollars and/or at a price per use libraries can handle. Indexes may be a different matter—they are labor intensive and it's harder to find volunteers to index than it is to find faculty to write and referee without remuneration.

We shouldn't let concern about prices

blind us to the need to invest in the future. Sending funds—maybe substantially more funds than the product is initially worth—to publishers with good track records is making an investment in the long-term availability of high quality low-priced titles.

If journals costing a hundred dollars or books costing fifty dollars should double or triple in price, they might still be bargains. Those costing several hundred or thousand dollars might not be bargains even if they were to lower their prices. It may be more difficult now to identify the problem players; and there is disagreement as to which they are. (Or, at least, many don't seem to agree with me as to their identities.) But it is possible, and not even very difficult, to identify publishers with long-term outstanding track records.

Once you've established that a title is high quality, there are common-sense ways of getting an idea of what the price should be. You can ascertain the average price of a title in the field. You can ascertain the average price of a title from this publisher. You can compare the two. Or, as with paper, you can look at per use costs. This isn't exact or scientific, but it tells you what ballpark you're playing in. When you find a publisher consistently producing good titles at reasonable prices, why not bet on that one? Don't worry too much about whether the current pricing structure is great. Just send money. And talk to your faculty about publishing there.

And They Were There — Reports of Meetings

YBP's GOBI Users' Group Meeting

YBP's GOBI Users' Group Meeting
January 14, 2001, ALA Midwinter, Washington D.C.

Report by Janet L. Flowers
(Head of Acquisitions, Academic Affairs Library, University of
North Carolina at Chapel Hill) <janet_flowers@unc.edu>

Bob Nardini began the meeting by reading a quote from **Calvin Coolidge**, upon visiting a Wisconsin state fair, about being more than an exhibit. He expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to do likewise. This was the **6th Annual GOBI Users' Meeting** and it does, indeed, indicate a trend within the library materials vending field whereby they need to meet with their customers in groups to talk about new products.

Gary Shirk, President and Chief Operating Officer, then talked about **YBP's** commitment to e-books. Currently, **YBP** is alpha testing the display of e-book options with **North Carolina State University**. They are

in negotiation with **NetLibrary** and expect an announcement very soon. He noted that **YBP** would provide whatever content publishers make available to them. He expects that within 4-6 months customers will be able to purchase e-books directly from **YBP**. They are currently working on the infrastructure to allow this. They expect to integrate e-books into their approval universe. This means that they will be profiled and offered as a choice much like paperback versus cloth. They plan to work on links from e-books to the print versions they have already treated and provide a retrospective list for their customers.

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THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF AGING
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Nardini then turned to a history of GOBI with visuals that showed the progression from YBP's manual files to microfiche to the telnet Folio version in 1991 and finally to the Web version of GOBI in 1996. He described how the system has evolved from an ordering device to an ILS-like system to a bibliographic utility and finally to a Web-based collection management software. These changes, as he noted, have been based upon customer demands.

Nardini next illustrated that progression through the example of a single core function, online selection. GOBI evolved from a system in which there was tagging, as online selection was called originally, but customers wanted more bibliographic and local data. From this point, there were requests for more local history, for GOBITween, linked editions, and duplication control. Customers also want defaults, templates, tables of contents, prioritization of selections, easy consultation with colleagues, peer activity comparisons, note capabilities, and report generation.

In the past five years, there have been 1,000 accounts that have begun using GOBI. There have been four major releases with hundreds of modifications.

There also was the integration of the data from Lindsay & Howes into the YBP database. Fully 50% of all YBP orders are entered through GOBI now.

Nardini emphasized that the current GOBI is a workhorse that is getting the job done. He then turned the program over to Mike Williams, the Vice President of Information Technology, who described why YBP is doing a major redesign of GOBI. Mike described the changes in software development over the past few years and noted that it was no longer easy to modify the existing monolithic program that has become GOBI. Williams cited the benefits of the new system as being easier to use and more intuitive, faster, more self-service oriented, more customizable, and extensible. He noted that the infrastructure will include the latest software tools such as XML and that they are using leading edge technology such as object-oriented design and that the design is component based so that changes will be easier to implement. He also described the Technical Team, which includes a number of high-level systems staff members and external consultants (including Ruth Fischer, first GOBI Project Manager). They have also hired a systems architect consultant and a user interface design consultant.

Hester Campbell, NewGOBI Product Manager, then showed some screen shots of

the proposed new design. It includes features such as improved navigation. There is a main menu bar across all screens. The use of the task and action buttons is consistent across all functions. There are no more drop down boxes. There will be the capability to save a search. Selectors will have the ability to customize their notification slip views and to save that as a default. They will be able to handle the various sorting that they currently do in the paper environment, such as consulting with others, "sending" the order to Acquisitions, discarding the slip, and holding lower priority selections.

In ordering, the Acquisitions staff will be able to search, edit, and cancel, create order templates, set preferences for binding and imports and order OP items (if they wish from Alibris).

A definite improvement is that "Continuations" are now integrated into the general database and is one of the options on the main menu! There is a search form and it is possible to find the series by putting in the ISBN of any volume there. It will also be possible to place the standing order through GOBI. There is also a feature to find out about back volumes and to order them through GOBI as well.

There will be new financial data including information about invoices, credits and

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Bestsellers on the European Union

by **Françoise Crowell** (Manager, Collection Development, International Sales Division, YBP Library Services, 999 Maple Street, Contoocook, NH 03229; Phone: 800-258-3774 x.3270, Fax: 603-746-5628) <fcrowell@YBP.com>

Every morning as I get ready for work I listen to the **BBC American Eworld News**. It is interesting because many of the events reported on do not make it to **NPR Morning Edition** that I listen to on the ride in to work. Now this seems to be changing and European news is becoming US news. *Mad Cow*, *Hoof and Mouth*, the Euro are all now part of our vocabulary. The European Union and the disintegration of national borders is big news. It is a growing topic for publishing as well. Over 250 scholarly titles on the EU were published in the last 12 months. Here are 50 of the top sellers covering most notably the environment, the Euro and the role of Europe in the World. Not quite travel reading, but certainly important additions to a library's collection.

Beatley, Timothy, 1957-. **Green Urbanism: Learning from European Cities**. Island Press 2000 \$30.00 Paper 1559636823.

Koslowski, Rey. **Migrants and Citizens: Demographic Change in the European State System**. Cornell Univ Press 2000 \$39.95 Cloth 0801437148.

Nuttall, Simon J. **European Foreign Policy**. Oxford Univ Press 2000 \$55.00 Cloth 0198293364.

Barnes, Pamela M., 1950-. **Environmental Policy in the European Union**. Edward Elgar 1999 \$95.00 Cloth 1858983398.

Grauwe, Paul De. **Economics of Mon-**

etary Union. Oxford Univ Press 2000 \$29.95 Paper 0198776322.

Walsh, James I. **European Monetary Integration & Domestic Politics: Britain, France, and Italy**. Lynne Rienner 2000 \$49.95 Cloth 1555878237.

Caporaso, James A., 1941-. **European Union: Dilemmas of Regional Integration**. Westview 2000 \$20.00 Paper 0813325838.

Ladrech, Robert. **Social Democracy and the Challenge of European Unity**. Lynne Rienner 2000 \$49.95 Cloth 1555879020.

Gros, Daniel. **Euro Capital Market**. John Wiley 2000 \$95.00 Cloth 0471997625.

Gilson, Julie. **Japan and the European Union: A Partnership for the Twenty-first Century?** St. Martin's/Scholarly 2000 \$65.00 Cloth 0312226160.

Environmental Governance in Europe: An Ever Closer Ecological Union? By Albert Weale...Et Al. Oxford Univ Press 2000 \$90.00 Cloth 0198297084.

After the Euro: Shaping Institutions for Governance in the Wake of European Monetary Union; Ed. by Colin Crouch. Oxford Univ Press 2000 \$65.00 Cloth 0198296398.

Reforming the European Union: from Maastricht to Amsterdam; Ed. by Philip Lynch. Longman 2000 \$24.95 Paper 0582289866.

Holmes, Douglas R., 1949-. **Integral Europe: Fast-Capitalism, Multiculturalism, Neofascism**. Princeton Univ Press 2000 \$55.00 Cloth 0691033889.

Why Deregulate Labour Markets?; Ed. by Gosta Esping-andersen. Oxford Univ Press 2000 \$74.00 Cloth 0198296819.

European Union: from Jean Monnet to the Euro; Ed. by Dean J. Kotlowski. Ohio Univ Press 2000 \$22.95 Paper 0821413317.

Gillespie, Richard, 1952-. **Spain and the Mediterranean: Developing a European Policy Towards the South**. St. Martin's/Scholarly 2000 \$69.95 Cloth 0312225768.

Minorities in European Cities: The Dynamics of Social Integration and Social Exclusion at the Neighbourhood Level; Ed. by Sophie Body-gendrot. St. Martin's/Scholarly 2000 \$65.00 Cloth 0312231326.

European Union and ASEAN: Trade and Investment Issues; Ed. by Roger Strange. St. Martin's/Scholarly 2000 \$69.95 Cloth 0312231849.

Why Europe?: Problems of Culture and Identity; V. 1: Political and Historical Dimensions; Ed. by Joe Andrew. St. Martin's/Scholarly 2000 \$65.00 Cloth 0312227930.

Smith, Martin A. **Building a Bigger Europe: EU and NATO Enlargement in Comparative Perspective**. Ashgate 2000 \$64.95 Cloth 1840144610.

National Co-ordination of EU Policy: The Domestic Level; Ed. by Hussein Kassim. Oxford Univ Press 2000 \$72.00 Cloth 0198296649.

Bini Smaghi, Lorenzo. **Open Issues in European Central Banking**. St. Martin's/Scholarly 2000 \$69.95 Cloth 0312228457.

Slomp, Hans, 1945-. **European Politics into the Twenty-first Century: Integration and Division**. Praeger 2000 \$69.50 Cloth 0275968006.

Maccormick, Neil. **Questioning Sovereignty: Law, State, and Nation in the European Commonwealth**. Oxford Univ Press 1999 \$72.00 Cloth 0198268769.

Rumford, Chris, 1958-. **European Cohesion?: Contradictions in EU Integration**. St. Martin's/Scholarly 2000 \$68.00 Cloth 0312229615.

Eldorado or Fortress? Migration in Southern Europe; Ed. by Russell King. St. Martin's/Scholarly 2000 \$65.00 Cloth 0312226152.

Levitt, Malcolm. **Political Economy of Monetary Union**. St. Martin's/Scholarly 2000 \$59.95 Cloth 031223189x.

Gendered Policies in Europe: Reconciling Employment and Family Life; Ed. by Linda Hantrais. St. Martin's/Scholarly 2000 \$65.00 Cloth 0312229232.

Cox, Aidan. **European Development**
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statements online (not just firm orders). The reporting capabilities will be enhanced to include a report scheduler for the automatic production of standard reports, consortial reports, peer reports, and global reports. Also, there will be reports showing inflation trends by subject, publisher, or in general.

There will also be a dynamic approval plan file that will provide more than a Word file of the Library's profile. It will enable staff to answer queries such as: Why did I get this book? Why did I get this slip? Why did I not get a slip or book? There also will be an online log of profile changes available as a report.

Nardini then reviewed the directions that libraries have been asking Yankee to go in. These include help with their internal online workflows, the ability to show a wider context for selection decisions (e.g.,

US/UK, cloth/paper). And, above all, to help them reduce costs.

Nardini outlined the steps that have been taken with this project, which included site visits back in August. There will be a features list sometime this spring. **NewGOBI** will have two components: the core functions (the ones most closely related to ordering a book) and the advanced functions. There will be no charge for the core functions. There will, however, be a charge for the advanced ones. **YBP** is currently considering how to decide upon the pricing and will be consulting customers regarding the possibilities. The ideas currently under consideration include a tiered approach based upon the customer's size (or volume of business), use of services by customers or likely use by customers. There will be alpha testing by libraries this spring, and beta testing in the fall. **YBP** hopes to unveil **NewGOBI** in the winter of 2001/2002. 🌱